CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.   (Original) A method for operating a telephony device comprising:

detecting a hook status of the telephony device coupled to an out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line; and

sending a message to the telephony device indicating that the Internet Protocol telephone line is out-of-service.

2.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the message includes a voice message.

3.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the message includes a text message.

4.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

sending a message indicating a telephone number to call to obtain service for the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line.

5.   (Original) The method according to claim 4, further comprising:

detecting one or more Dual Tone Multiple Frequecy tones on the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line.

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6.   (Original) The method according to claim 5, further comprising:

signaling a call agent to establish a connection between the out-of-service Internet

Protocol telephone line and a predetermined service provider.

7.   (Original) The method according to claim 6, further comprising:

establishing a connection between the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone

line and the predetermined service provider.

8.   (Original) The method according to claim 7, further comprising:

removing the connection between the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone

line and the predetermined service provider after completion of a call between the user

and the predetermined service provider.

9.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said detecting further

comprises:

applying a loop current to the out-of-service telephone line.

10.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said detecting further

comprises:

applying a loop current to the out-of-service telephone line for a predetermined

interval sufficient to detect a hook status.

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11.   (Original) The method according to claim 10, wherein the predetermined interval comprises about 50 milliseconds every one-second interval.

12.   (Original) The method according to claim 10, wherein said detecting further comprises removing the loop current from the out-of-service telephone line after the predetermined interval.

13.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said detecting further comprises:

        applying a loop current to the out-of-service telephone line for a first predetermined period sufficient to detect a hook status; and

        removing the loop current from the out-of-service telephone line after the first predetermined period for a second predetermined period, which is significantly longer than the first predetermined period.

14.   (Original) The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
        continuously repeating the applying and removing.

15.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising sending a message indicating a status of one or more telephone lines.

16.   (Original) An apparatus comprising:

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an Internet Protocol interface coupled to an Internet Protocol telephone line, which is provisioned as out-of-service;

a telephone port to couple to a telephony device; and

a processor detecting a hook status of the telephony device coupled to the telephone port and generating a message to be output to the telephony device indicating that the Internet Protocol telephone line is out-of-service.

17.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the processor sends a message indicating a telephone number to call to obtain service for the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line.

18.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the processor detects one or more Dual Tone Multiple Frequency tones to be output over the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line.

19.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the processor signals a call agent to establish a connection between the out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line and a predetermined service provider.

20.   (Original) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said processor detects the hook status of the telephony device by continuously:

applying a loop current to the out-of-service telephone line for a first predetermined period sufficient to detect a hook status; and

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removing the loop current from the out-of-service telephone line after the first

predetermined period for a second predetermined period, which is significantly longer

than the first predetermined period.

21.   (Original) A communications apparatus comprising:

a loop current controller controlling a loop current on a telecommunications line;

a hook status detector detecting a hook status of a telephone device coupled to the

telecommunications line;

a loop current settling timer initiated upon application of loop current by the loop

current controller to the telecommunications line, and upon expiration of the loop current

settling timer said hook status detector initiating a hook status test;

a hook status test timer initiated upon initiation of a hook status test by the hook

status detector, and upon expiration of the hook status test timer said loop current

controller removing the loop current from the telecommunications line;

an off-hook polling timer initiated upon removal of the loop current from the

telecommunications line by the loop current controller, and upon expiration of the off-

hook polling timer said loop current controller applying the loop current to the

telecommunications line; and

a debounce timer initiated upon detection of an off-hook status by the hook status

detector, upon expiration initiating an out-of-service instruction to be played to the

telephone device over the telecommunications line after which the loop current controller

removing loop current from the telecommunications line and initiating the off-hook

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polling timer, and said debounce timer being stopped upon detection of an on-hook status

by the hook status detector.

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